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Gabriel Motzkin

The Invention of History and the Reinvention of Memory

I

By the invention of history, I mean the application of historical categories as the primary way of interpreting the past. By the reinvention of memory, I mean the return of interest to the problems of personal and collective memory once doubts arose about the usefulness of historical categories for interpreting the particular ways in which the past is retained and re-experienced.

While the basic categories for historical thinking have been available since Antiquity, these categories were used in a special way in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely, as the primary basis for cultural legitimacy. In turn, this claim that categories of historical explanation provide the primary basis for human experience presupposed a redefinition of the function of memory. This reconceptualization of memory took place in seventeenth-century France, and was an essential presupposition for the development of historicism in the second half of the eighteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, some philosophers began to question the belief in history. While intellectuals and masses continued to affirm their belief in history throughout most of the twentieth century, recently this loss of belief in self-definition through recourse to the historical past has become widespread.

The consciousness that there are different ways of recording and interpreting history is older than the seventeenth century. Yet there are few disciplines in which the change in practice and self-conception between the traditional and the modern way of doing things was so marked as in the science of history. The pre-seventeenth-century historian had a very different sense of

time than the modern historian. He did not even have a single measure of universal time. Even the B.C.–A.D. chronological system was only introduced by Petavius in 1627. Without a single, universal order for arranging events, the traditional historian had to create his categories on the basis of time as tense, on the basis of time as past, present, and future.

As Wilcox has noted in *The Measure of Times Past*,¹ historians very early sought to get away from this limitation to tense-time, and to create a single order for arranging and interpreting events, but they were limited by this fundamental lack of a universal chronology. They could then interpret the history of the world only in terms of discontinuous periods and ages. These discontinuities between different historical periods are similar to the discontinuities that are sometimes used to mark the transition in tense from past to present to future.

Universal chronology made it possible to conceive history in the terms of a universal continuity. While this universal continuity was derived from the assumption that time is linear and universal, historians applied it to the continuity of events, which they distinguished from the continuity of time. Historical research was "emancipated" from the idea that time itself is significant for historical events; we do not say that Franz Ferdinand was assassinated because it was 1914. Historians preferred to assume that history is indifferent to time, that succession is simply a law of events. On the basis of the assumption of a linear, continuous time, the conclusion was drawn that the categories past, present, and future really make no sense when they are understood as divisions of time. Then, the linear succession of events was distinguished from the linear succession of time. In turn, past, present, and future were reintroduced as purely historical categories, marking off domains in the succession of events rather than a succession of moments in time. Constructing connections between events without reference to time as a causal factor made it possible to find causes, and to discern a chain of succession of cause and effect, quite separate from the temporal process.

There is a contradiction implicit in the denial of tense, of past, present, and future, in the temporal process, while asserting the usefulness of tense

¹ Donald J. Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).

— without time — in the historical explanation of the causal process. Historical explanation uses tense causally as a measure of historical difference, as a measure of the variability of difference between the past and the present. The contradiction implicit in this use of tense for determining historical difference is the contradiction between the succession of events and the idea implicit in the causal use of tense that the succession of tenses does not really correspond to the succession of events. Things may have been very different in the past because of what has taken place between the past and the present, but here past and present are being used only as markers. One cannot say even on the basis of the *causal* succession of events that the past has caused the present, any more than one can say on the basis of the linear succession of time that one moment causes another. There are two points here: succession is not causality; and one kind of causality does not imply another kind of causality.

Thus history, in order to resolve this contradiction between the rejection of tense as a measure of both time and events and the employment of tense as a measure of historical difference, must obligate itself to the notion that while events take place successively, the difference between past and present is not derived from this succession. Historical periodization is not only not a consequence of time; it is not even a consequence of events.

Historicism, the ideology that meaning derives from history, is then not a discovery of time but rather an internally contradictory program for the emancipation from its tyranny. However, this goal of the emancipation of history from time, which makes historical science as a form of secular redemption very powerful, is only possible so long as we continue to entertain the notion of time as a meaningless succession. If we introduce other notions of time, of intensity or duration or discontinuity, then history again becomes subordinate to time, and one can no longer maintain that the historical enterprise defines the human endeavor.

This kind of argument appears to be contemporary and modish, because it celebrates the primacy of time, and suggests that all phenomena are subject to time's rule. It also suggests that we postmoderns are closer to the essence of the modern enterprise than nineteenth-century historians, since we take seriously the idea that all phenomena exist in a world defined by time; and this is the idea that has attained ever-greater cultural universality since the onset of secularization in the seventeenth century. This predominance of time as a cultural metaphor has now become so widespread that it has

become almost meaningless to seek to conceive of history or memory as ways of access to the past that themselves are either links outside of time to a past in time (which is what historicists really wanted) or temporal links to a past that is outside of time. The contemporary interest in memory stems from the desire to escape the oppressive universality of time in a situation in which historical action no longer creates meaning but is itself a consequence of a context unimagined by historians, the context of the time-frame. The recent literature devoted to different conceptions of time and memory reflects the confrontation inside the historical profession with this notion of variable time. A variable conception of time, however, has consequences for any theory of action: namely, it may be difficult to maintain a strong theory of action together with a variable notion of time, although, as we shall see, the resolution of the tension between time and action may well be our present task.

Against the notion that time is variable, some anthropologists have argued that while the concept of time as succession may be only a projective act of the imagination, it is nonetheless present in every culture.² This position makes it possible once again to detach the (cultural) variability in human action from the (culturally inexpressible) variability of time, and then to ascribe the (cultural) variability in conceptions of tense-time to some non-temporal source such as the means of production or the climatic or environmental conditions. In an analogous manner, historicists also believed in both a universal human nature and cultural relativity, and then explained cultural variation by non-universal social contexts.

The contradiction between the conflicting pasts supposed by successive time and by tense-time is a contradiction that historical works can interpret, but which they cannot overcome, because they are obliged to use both senses of time, and cannot really deny either. This contradiction between tense-time and successive time is even greater for the past than for the present, since time as succession denies the sense of the past as tense, whereas it does not deny the sense of the present.

This contradiction surfaces in historical science as the contradiction between subjectivity and science, and it is basic for the invention of history as a science. In historiography, the problem of subjectivity derives from

² Alfred Gell, *The Anthropology of Time: Cultural Constructions of Temporal Maps and Images* (Oxford: Berg, 1992).

the problem of tense-time, and the problem of the application of scientific method to history derives from the assumption that time is successive. Correspondingly, historians elide the problem of their own subjectivity in one of two ways: either by developing a scientific method of analysis that allegedly neutralizes that subjectivity, or by replacing their subjectivity with the subjectivity of the historical agent, suggesting that their own subjectivities are capable of reconstructing the subjectivity of a past historical agent.

However, that strong assumption about the ability to reconstruct the past, a strong assumption because it assumes that we can reconstruct the emotional attitude of past agents, can only be rooted in a very strong theory about the subjectivity of the historian, namely, that the historian as a subject, indeed any subject, is capable of reconstructing the subjectivity of another subject, whether past or present — unless one were to claim that one can only reconstruct the subjectivity of a past, dead subject, but not of a living one, arguing perhaps that the living other is indeterminate. Then, however, the reconstruction of the other's subjectivity assumes his deadness as necessary for his reconstruction. This theory, however, would only be coherent if it could distinguish between subjectivity and reconstruction: we can reconstruct the other because he is not really there as a subject. In that case, however, we would fail in our aim of reconstructing the other's subjectivity, and therefore this theory of reconstructing the past must be viewed as being incoherent. Thus, there can be no strong argument for our capacity to reconstruct the subjectivity of past agents.

The other, perhaps more successful, way of justifying this form of historical empathy must be that there is something about the subjectivity of the dead historical agent which allows for his reconstruction. In this view, it is not we who are living who extend ourselves into the past, which is an intuition we have of our relation to the past that is based on our putative capacity to imagine the past. It is rather they who are dead who are extended into the future, and it is this extension of the dead into the future, their "afterlife," that is the object viewed by the historian.

In that sense, Aeneas viewing the procession of his descendants is not a metaphor invented by Virgil, but a description of something present in the apprehension of the interaction between history and time, namely, that the application of the categories of "before" and "after" to history, of temporal succession to history, means that we view historically in the reverse way

from the way in which events are experienced.³ If we were really looking back, we would see the last first and the first last: Adam would come at the end of the procession. But in telling the story, we place ourselves as subjects at the beginning of the stories we tell. Insofar as we predicate these stories as true stories, we have then engaged in a temporal inversion of the sequence of experience as viewed from the present. Aeneas would carry out the same temporal inversion if he were to view the procession of his descendants from the end to the beginning.

There is an asymmetry in this respect between the future and the past. The reason for this asymmetry is that the future ends at another point in time, whereas the past ends now. In telling the tale of the past, we take the now as its future, and prefer the past as experienced in the past to the past as experienced from the present, i.e., we tell the tale of the past experienced as a form of future time, linear succession to a well-defined point. If we were to tell a tale about the future, we would either have to regress to the now, or choose a future point in time as the end of succession. That future point, however, would function in the same way as the now for a history that ends now. Aeneas, by viewing the procession of the future from the beginning to such an end, is carrying out the same temporal inversion that we carry out when we restructure the past from the beginning to the present. I have deliberately ignored the relation between Aeneas' time and the reader's time, because I believe that the inversion between future and past can be seen without reference to the reader's time, which can substitute for the now in a literary text.

Yet this restructuring of experience is not the order of history. History is not one thing after another because it is a causal account and not a sequential, annalistic narrative. Succession is rather the way in which we apply a principle of order to the disjointed events of memory. The requirement of beginning our tales at the beginning existed long before the development of historical science. It may well be a consequence of applying a spatial sequencing of near and far to the events present in memory. In turn, this application of narrativity implies that causality is applied to events in memory before it is applied to the historical past. The attitude of retrospection,

³ Maurizio Bettini, *Anthropology and Roman Culture: Kinship, Time, Images of the Soul* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 115–120, 144–149.

which precedes the temporal rearrangement of the past as a tale told from the beginning, is then the attitude in which causality is first applied to memory, by looking back to discern the causes of what did happen. The historical narrative is then distinguished from other narratives in that it does not construct its causality as a consequence of the narrative, but rather presupposes that causality as its substructure. That causality in turn is itself a structure retrospectively applied to events as a consequence of a retrospective projection of memory. That retrospective attitude is prescientific, for it is already present in the subjective ordering of experience, and it is quite compatible with the experience of the past as tense: it assumes causality as the principle for ordering succession in a tensed world. The attribution of causality is then a transition from tense to succession, succeeding the experience of tense and preceding the elaboration of succession. Causality cannot then function as a mode for the emancipation from temporal succession, as historicists believed.

II

The historical attitude to the past was first a subjective attitude and then a scientific attitude. Namely, the genesis of historical science required a new subjective attitude, one in which the past could penetrate into the present. For example, Husserl's philosophy of time is in contrast one in which the present extends into the past, and it is therefore an anti-historicist philosophy, although it seems to meet the requirements of retrospection, of looking backward, quite well. However, it is the idea that there is a sense in which the past as tense can penetrate into the present that allows both for the assumption of a break between the past and the present and for a continuity between the two, and it is this double and contradictory assumption about the relations of past and present that is a prerequisite for the development of the historical attitude. The questions that this model raises are two: When and under what conditions and in what mode did such a new attitude to subjectivity originate? When and under what conditions was this subjective attitude combined with the scientific attitude?

The argument has been made that the origin of subjectivity in this sense, i.e., in the historical sense of retrospection, can be traced to Petrarch's ascent of Mount Ventoux, in which the poet, looking down from an enforced perspectival distance, sees not only the landscape extended beneath

him but also the antique past and his own heart rolled into one, using the distancing element of mountain-climbing to gain a better vantage-point on a past with which he wishes to identify.⁴

This derivation of subjectivity is appealing, for it locates the origins of modernity in a literary figure of undoubted sincerity, thus tying subjectivity both to authenticity and to literature. I do not believe that Petrarchan subjectivity is sufficient for even a pre-scientific historical subjectivity because it does not provide an application of causality to memory. Petrarch does not provide a causal theory of the relation between lived subjectivity and the past.

I believe that the emblematic moment for the introduction of subjectivity into the discourse about the past is indicated by the associated names of Mme. de La Fayette in her novel *La Princesse de Clèves* and the Duc de la Rochefoucauld in his memoirs. These texts confront a sense of break with the past, a sense of break which is determinative for historical writing because it threatens the causal coherence between past and present, a causal coherence that historical writing seeks to restore. However, that alone would be insufficient, for Petrarch also felt a break with the past, but for him this remote past was not his own past. For La Rochefoucauld, the sense of the gap between the lived past and the present leads to skepticism about the self, the kind of skepticism to which Descartes sought to respond. This skepticism is not skepticism about subjectivity as such, but about the relation between a modern, individual subject and the past.

This sense of skepticism about the past stems from two sources: first, the radical break in experience the Fronde signified for rebellious and defeated aristocrats such as La Rochefoucauld and the Cardinal de Retz, which meant for them that the only way in which they could henceforth link the disjointed parts of their life was subjectively, further political action being unrealistic. The political meaning of this embrace of subjectivity was the defense against absolutism, asserting that the victorious King could not penetrate the private realm.

The second source of this skepticism concerned the relation between truth and the best genre for narrating the past, i.e., the question of which genre would best tell the truth about the past, history, novels, or memoirs. In the early eighteenth century, Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy, masquerading

⁴ Wilcox (see note 1 above), pp. 153–158.

as Gordon de Percey, was to claim that the truth about the past is best told as historical fiction, since the link between the attitudes and intentions of past agents and their actions is best told as an invention. Because "true" histories are subject to both methodological and political limitations, they cannot communicate attitudes.

One motive for the invention of historical science was the combat against these two varieties of skepticism, the one viewing experience as fragmentary and historical events as causing this fragmentation of the self, and the other doubting the possibility of providing a true narration of the past. I believe, however, that the solution to this problem was not discovered by historians, but rather borrowed by them from one of their sources, the memoirs of late seventeenth-century absolutist France that first thematized the modern problem of memory.

Memoirs addressed the problem of providing coherence for the lived past of lived experience. This model for coherence was then copied to the unexperienced or unlived past. History as a science could provide tools for the research of the past, but it could not provide a model for the coherence of experience, and it had to borrow this model from elsewhere.

In an opposite movement, individuals after the French Revolution often turned to historical science in order to understand their own lived experience. But that later recourse to history assumed the availability of a historical science that contained within it a coherent model for the interpretation of experience. Thus nineteenth-century individuals learned to interpret their personal experience in historical categories, and could use these categories to reinterpret their memories of what they had lived through. Once a coherent theory of historical subjectivity had been developed and applied as an encasing framework for historical experience, it no longer had to be thematized. Hence the problem of memory is largely absent in nineteenth-century historical theory.

For history to function as a basic code for interpreting experience, memory had to be encased within subjectivity in such a way that historical science could later confront the problem of memory *as* the problem of subjectivity. Because memory was viewed as part of subjectivity, the issue for nineteenth-century historicism was the relation between history and subjectivity and not the relation between history and memory.

In contrast, seventeenth-century memoirs sought to provide a private account of public events. The seventeenth-century memorialists were quite

conscious of their distance from Philippe de Commynes, who was viewed as the founder of the genre. They rather emphasized their individual perspective of political events, and sought to convey the emotional reality of public life as well as the public realization of the self. Their work reflects three goals: providing a coherent account of their own lives, subverting the official history propagated by the French court, and seeking to provide the future with an alternative past. It is noteworthy that the Duc de Saint-Simon, a generation later, counseled that his memoirs be published in the generation of his grandchildren, when readers would still be close enough to events and to his historical context to intuit the meaning of his narrative, yet his publisher would be far enough to run no danger of political persecution. In an analogous fashion, Mme. de La Fayette quite consciously chose the court of Henri II for her novel as a time at the fading border of living memory, a time that she depicts as a between-time between the lost world of Medieval chivalry and the sordid and seedy court of her own day. The subjectivity of lived time was first extended to the frontiers of generational time, the barely-remembered past, and the barely-visible future.

Memoirs fell into disrepute in the eighteenth century because so many memoirs appeared that were fictional. It is quite impossible for any but a professional historian of the period to distinguish between true and fictional memoirs, since fictional memoirs pretending to relate political events appeared in the hundreds.⁵ Moreover, as noted, it was not clear even to historical theorists that true memoirs enjoy an advantage over false memoirs in the depiction of subjectivity. It was not the fictionality of memoirs, but rather their failure to provide a coherent depiction of the past that led to their falling out of fashion as a primary genre for understanding the past.

Historical research antedated memoirs. The idea that sources and documents should be authentic is at least as old as the fifteenth century, and it stimulated a wide variety of historical research in the late sixteenth century. Local historical research can be found in the period, but this kind of research was often stigmatized as antiquarianism because it did not appear to provide criteria of significance in the interpretation of the past.

Just as barber-surgeons and doctors eventually joined to become one

⁵ René Démoris, *Le roman à la première personne: Du Classicisme aux Lumières* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1975), pp. 190–199.

profession, antiquarianism was integrated with memorial subjectivity in the eighteenth century, notably in Germany. It has been argued that historical subjectivity is a kind of secularized Christian subjectivity that can be traced to various Protestant theologians.⁶ In my view, this kind of subjectivity has a secular and almost antireligious origin in a Catholic context in which this subjectivity had a political origin. However, the integration of subjectivity and science did not take place in the political context in which this subjectivity was first articulated.

Reinhart Koselleck has traced the employment of point of view in historical interpretation to Chladenius in the early eighteenth century.⁷ He argues that previous historiography sought to have no point of view, and that in contrast modern historical scholarship is quite openly partisan, evoking the reader's subjective identification with the historical narrative by applying the technique of point of view. Certainly, contemporary scholarship locates the origins of historicism in eighteenth-century Germany before the French revolution, and views this kind of modern historical scholarship as an attempt to provide historical coherence in the absence of political coherence.⁸ That was also Friedrich Meinecke's implicit argument in his *Origin of Historicism*.⁹ However, the problem of the origins of the application of perspective to historical scholarship in the eighteenth century has not yet been fully explored. One possible theory would be that the application of scientific method necessarily entailed the adoption of subjectivity. I believe, however, that locating the origins of cognitive subjectivity in seventeenth-century philosophy is insufficient to explain the origins of historical subjectivity. As a cultural artifact, history was

⁶ Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 273–276.

⁷ Reinhart Koselleck, "Perspective and Temporality: A Contribution to the Historiographical Exposure of the Historical World," in Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 130–158.

⁸ Peter H. Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

⁹ Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1959).

"invented" in order to resolve the conflicting claims of subjectivity and science as methods for interpreting the past.

III

The incorporation of the problem of memory into the problem of subjectivity in modern historiography was complemented in nineteenth-century historical science by the assumption of a linear succession of events. For nineteenth-century historians the problem of historical causality was not the relation of history to time but rather the relation of events to historical subjects. The distinction between causality and time, and the redefinition of the relation between causality and linear succession, facilitated an individual, subjective concept of memory. Thus nineteenth-century historical science could reframe the relation between memory and time as the relation between subjectivity and causality.

If, however, either succession or the notion of a cognitively and affectively coherent subject were questioned, then this historical synthesis would prove incoherent as a mode of explanation for the past relations between self and world. One could perhaps conceive of a situation in which one of these assumptions — of event-succession (or linear time) as subsuming tense-time, or of subjectivity as the context for memory — is questioned while the other assumption would still hold. A theory of subjectivity without linear time can be found in many fin-de-siècle novels, and is also present in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which shows the need for a radical redefinition of subjectivity once the concept of linear time is abandoned. A theory in which linear time is presumed but subjectivity disappears in favor of memory can be found in Freud.

As it happened, however, both the inherited notion of subjectivity and the idea of time as succession were questioned at about the same time. Such a correlation stimulates thought about the possibility of an inherent relation between subjectivity and linear time, despite the attempt to resolve this problem through substituting a linear succession of events for linear time. Such an inherent relation would pose difficulties for Freud and Heidegger. However, it is possible that this relation is historical rather than inherent.

Nonetheless, it is clear that fin-de-siècle skepticism about both linear

time and subjectivity unveiled the phenomenon of memory as a central problem for Western culture. It is interesting that the issue of memory surfaces at times of a sensed threat of cultural incoherence. St. Augustine's discussion of memory is clearly informed by the possibility of not remembering. In an analogous manner, seventeenth-century memoirs sought to preserve a different past than the official one. At the end of the nineteenth century, the issue of memory, as Maurice Halbwachs understood, became a cultural issue, namely, the issue of how societies remember became an issue for the self-interpretation of Western societies.¹⁰

Our reading of texts on memory should always be guided by our ascertainment of the opposing concept to memory. Relatively few texts place memory in apposition to forgetting, as we are wont to do. Augustine contrasts memory to anticipation. For Hegel, memory resides alongside imagination. Whereas for Heidegger, forgetting exists, but memory does not: it has been replaced by praxis, which is then the contrary for forgetting. In one set of texts, memory means the preservation of everything, so that the absence of memory is not an erasure; in another set of texts, there can be no storage memory, since consciousness is an act, and therefore what we think of as memory is really intentional reproduction.¹¹

The reappearance of the issue of memory in Bergson and Proust was based on one of two conflicting assumptions about the nature of memory: either that memory is related to duration, to a non-linear time that is ultimately unconscious, and that therefore memory is not identical with consciousness, but rather assures the coherence of the context for consciousness; or that memory means the overcoming of linear time by introducing a discontinuity into experience, a flashback that ensures the reality of a doubted past, and that in this way memory is really a sign that the reality of existence can overcome time conceived as the force that annihilates existence. For Proust, memory, as the ultimate validation of subjective continuity, is opposed to time.

The urgent issue underpinning this controversy about the nature and significance of memory can be seen clearly when we consider our own

¹⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1925).

¹¹ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), § 19, pp. 47–49.

situation, one in which the debate about memory has become a central cultural debate. I have suggested that a contextual condition for this debate is the situation in which there is a sense of incoherence about the relations between internal time and external time, so that the one time is opposed to the other, and appears to be always on the verge of annihilating it: either succession makes personal experience nugatory, or personal experience cannot be anchored in the successive time which we assume is an attribute of our external or at least cultural and social reality.

This contextual description however does not adequately describe the issue in the debate about memory, namely, the notion that we must find a way to assert the reality of memory in a situation in which we cannot appeal to a notion of the subject as the bearer of memory. It is this issue that is addressed in the debate about collective memory and in the development of a historical science of collective memory, one which by its nature is poised delicately between historicism and anti-historicism. The study of collective memory assumes that, in the absence of subjects, memory can be investigated as an act or event, thus seeking to save the event from its embeddedness in historical causality.

The deeper cultural assumption is that we decide to memorialize, to preserve ourselves, as a collective act. In an age in which the future is presumed to be invisible, we are engaged in the process of inventing a social memory to replace individual memories. The Marxist, or collectivist impulse in modern culture, at the moment of its possible disappearance, turns to the research of memorialization, through which it wishes to recreate a social identity endowed with a memory, in place of the disappearing societies of the nineteenth century, which possessed histories rather than memories.

The rediscovery of memory at the beginning of this century occurred because of the obsolescence of history as a coherent model for relating subjectivity to experience. Memory was taken to be something real in a context in which historical categories began to seem illusory. In our time, the focus on memory continues for two reasons. First, the issue of the cultural relations between selves and worlds has not been resolved. Anthropologists debate the issue of whether tense-time or successive time is the more universal cultural phenomenon. Second, in opposition to history, memory is perceived as a social or personal act.

This idea of memory as an active process of remembering, while

philosophically obligated to Husserl, who may be the true progenitor of our postmodernity, is a remarkable transformation of the notions of memory present in turn-of-the-century thinking, for which memory was involuntary, passive, or stored. Thus our reinvention of memory has brought together the ideas of acting and remembering, and seeks a resolution of the possible conflict between a strong theory of action and a variable notion of time. In this way, it is analogous to nineteenth-century theories of historical action. However, the subject who commemorates is no longer a subject, and moreover seeks to remember outside of history.

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